MEMORIAL

OF THE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,

APPOINTED AT A MEETING OF THE

TAX-PAYERS

OF THE

CITY AND COUNTY OF PHILADELPHIA,

TO PROMOTE THE PASSAGE OF A LAW

TO

PROHIBIT THE MANUFACTURE AND SALE

OF

INTOXICATING LIQUORS,

TO THE LEGISLATURE OF PENNSYLVANIA.

PHILADELPHIA:
BROWN'S STEAM POWER BOOK AND JOB PRINTING OFFICE, LEDGER BUILDING.
1852.

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To the Honorable, the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The Memorial of the undersigned, an Executive Committee, appointed at a meeting of the Tax Payers of the City and County of Philadelphia, favorable to the enactment of a Law prohibiting the Manufacture and Sale of Intoxicating Liquors,

Humbly Showeth,

That, on behalf of those whom they represent, your memorialists beg leave very respectfully to urge upon your honorable bodies, that justice and a proper regard for the welfare and happiness of the people, require of the legislative authority its interference to put an end to the many and oppressive evils which have grown up and are rapidly spreading under its sanction by virtue of the laws which now exist licensing the sale of intoxicating beverages.

And your memorialists believe that the principles embodied in the bill now before the Legislature, entitled "An Act to prohibit the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors," can alone secure equal justice to all, and afford that full protection in the premises which the theory of our government accords as the right of every citizen.

It is one of the most obvious, fundamental and well-settled principles of justice between man and man in a social state, that one cannot rightfully do any act or pursue any occupation the tendency of which is to do injury to those around him, and it is equally well-settled that to protect each individual member of the community in the free and equal enjoyment of whatever may conduce to the promotion of his interests or happiness, unmolested by the conduct of others, is one of the chief objects of government.

It is upon these plain and familiar principles that we appeal to the legislative power in the case in hand.

Intemperance and its concomitant vices are not merely the occasional and accidental results of the traffic in intoxicating liquors, but they are consequences which result from it necessarily, uniformly and inevitably. The one cannot exist without the other.

It is not with any greater certainty and uniformity that light follows the rising and darkness the going down of the sun, than that a community is filled with poverty, crime, wretchedness, degradation and depravity, in all their hideous forms, and taxation greatly increased, as the consequence of the sale and use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage.

It is impossible, therefore, that a man can engage in the sale of such an article without doing injury to those around him, and this he has no right to do. His profit is another's loss. His gains are drawn, as it were, from the very life-blood of the community which surrounds him.

The wide field of honest industry, embracing a vast variety of useful and honorable professions, is open to all, and little less can result to the liquor seller by being obliged to discontinue his present occupation, but much loss is suffered by its continuance.

The indulgence of a depraved and morbid appetite, is also a very insufficient excuse for him who would desire to perpetuate misery and wrong among his fellow-beings, in order to have the means thereby to accomplish his own ruin, and to bring poverty and disgrace upon his family and connexions.

The extent of the agency of intemperance in producing pauperism and crime can scarcely be over estimated.

The number of cases in the Medical Department of the Philadelphia Alms House, for the year ending January 1, 1852, was 5000. Deducting from the whole number 280 infants, and 147 whose habits were unknown, there remains 4573. Of these 3606 were of intemperate habits, including 897 females.

These observations, which were carefully made by the Physicians, furnish a fair standard for all cases of the kind, and the result shows that about eight out of every ten of the paupers throughout our commonwealth who become a charge upon the tax payers of the respective counties, are made such by intemperance.

Assuming the proportion of crime resulting from a like cause to be about the same, we may therefore safely lay it down that at leas

three fourths of the whole is brought about by the sale and use of intoxicating liquors.

The aggregate of the several items of expense, chargeable to crime and pauperism in the city and county of Philadelphia, is not less than half a million of dollars, the proportion of which directly chargeable to intemperance, therefore, exceeds $350,000, which amount is annually drained from the pockets of our citizens on account of the unjust and iniquitous system which now prevails.

But the amount of pecuniary loss sustained by the people in consequence of the traffic, is a matter of small moment compared with the misery, wretchedness and moral degradation brought upon its victims. While the efforts of the benevolent and philanthropic are being exhausted in relieving the sufferings of the poor, and endeavoring to elevate their condition, and while schools are kept up to educate their children and make them good citizens, thousands of groggeries belch for ththeir damning influence upon society, under the solemn sanction of law, to thwart all these benevolent efforts and produce a contrary result.

The sale of intoxicating liquors has been sanctioned by law for a long period, and to prohibit it now by a peremptory law, may seem to some an astounding proposition. But gambling, lotteries, horse racing, and many other practices much less productive of evil than this, have been sanctioned in a like manner, but are now prohibited.

Neither lapse of time nor common usage can make wrong right, or give to one portion of the people an indefeasible right to pursue a business deleterious to the health, moral happiness, or pecuniary interest of another portion.

The principle of legislative interference now invoked, is not new, but is the same as is applied in all cases of legislation, to prevent crime and promote the general good.

It is objected against it that so stringent a law cannot be effectually carried out, and will be violated. But shall the Legislature give loose reins to the commission of murder, robbery, &c., or license these crimes to a small extent, because laws entirely prohibiting them will be violated? Rather let the government wash its hands of this evil, and suppress it to the extent of its power, which is all that can be required or expected.

A memorial has recently been addressed to your honorable bodies

by the brewers, malsters and owners of breweries in the city and county of Philadelphia, in which they allege that malt liquors are not objectionable, and that their manufacture constitutes an important branch of trade, employing within the city and county a capital of two millions of dollars, requiring a daily expenditure of $1000, giving employment to a large number of persons of various trades, &c.

We dissent entirely from the statement that fermented liquors are free from the objections admitted to apply to ardent spirits.

It is true that they contain a less proportion of the intoxicating principle, but they are on that very account the more insidious and dangerous, as a means of enticing the young and unwary into habits of confirmed intemperance and dissipation, and it is a well known fact that a very large amount of the intemperance and its attendant vices which prevail among us proceeds from the use of malt liquors alone.

The facts so carefully developed as to the extent of the trade in malt liquors, so far from sustaining their position, furnishes additional evidence of the magnitude of the evils of which we complain.

It is truly lamentable to find how large a proportion of the capital and active industry of our community is employed in producing an article the only use of which is to fill society with degradation, misery and crime.

But to the capital thus employed, is to be added that which as a resulting consequence has to be invested in alms-houses, jails and halls for the administration of criminal justice; and it is a somewhat singular coincidence, that the amount paid by the brewers to their workmen and others, to wit, $1000 per day, is just about the daily average of the taxes paid within the city and county on account of the current cost of the crime and pauperism resulting in a great measure from their nefarious business.

It is to be regretted, and none do more sincerely and honestly regret than do your memorialists, that this traffic cannot be broken up without a pecuniary loss to many who are now engaged in it; but this, in most instances, will amount only to a temporary disadvantage, inasmuch as the capital and labor now employed in it can be readily transferred to other equally profitable employments, and which are free from the dangers and temptations which often make

liquor sellers and those around them themselves the victims of the ruin they deal out to others.

But we look entirely beyond all such considerations as those urged by the brewers in their memorial in favor of the continuance of their trade. There is a louder and much more impressive call upon our sympathies from the thousands and tens of thousands of our fellow beings who are made miserable, degraded, and unhappy by it.

No amount of pecuniary profit to those who are engaged in it can compensate for the immense evils which it entails upon society. If all the losses which the community suffers from it had to be borne by those who now enjoy its profits, they would find it to their interests to quit the business.

For these, and many other reasons, we respectfully but earnestly ask of your honorable bodies that an act may be passed prohibiting entirely the manufacture and sale of all intoxicating liquors except for medicinal, mechanical and artistical purposes.

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